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BETWEEN LOVE AND WAR: THE EFFECTS OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENTIN ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: *What is the relationship, ifany, between affective commitment and organizational politics? How do these two factors affect overall company performance? The main objective of this paper is to identify the influenceof organizational politics on the organizational performance of the company and to find the possible influence, within the same relationship, of affective organizational commitment. We therefore designed an empirical study and applied a survey in 134 Mexican SMEs involved infootwear manufacturing.*

Our research indicates a strong relationship between affective commitment and organizational outcome. The literature warns about the negative influence of playing politics on overall company performance, but we found that organizational politics combined with affective commitment does not affect organizational performance and could even represent a new tool in achievingbetter organizational commitment.

Keywords: *Organizational politics; organizational performance; affective commitment.*

Purpose: *The aim of this paper is to identify the influence of organizational politics on organizational performance, having as a moderator the results of affective commitment measured in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) in the footwear manufacturing industry from the state of Jalisco, Mexico.*

Design/methodology/approach: *We designed an empirical study and developed a questionnaire to apply in a representative sample of 134 companies and 421 subjects. Our methodology also includes a case study and interviews. We applied the techniques of linear regression analysis and Pearson correlation to test our hypotheses as well asthe Perception of Politics Scale (POPS), which has been used widely in United the States and Canada but not in Mexico.*

Practical implications: *This study provides interesting implications for managers on how to take advantage of a common behavior: the way employees organize themselves in order to get what they want. Politics should not be seen as a dysfunctional or aberrant behavior but as an organizational advantage.*

1. INTRODUCTION

We understand politics as the accumulation and the exercise of power in order to reconcile different interests; that is why we believe that a company, no matter its size, is involved in politics every day (Ramirez, Baños and Orozco, 2014). Organizational politics is a fundamental aspect of organizational life and relates to power, authority and influence. Power is defined as an attempt to influence the behavior of another actor and the ability to mobilize resources on behalf of a goal or strategy (Tushman, 1977; Pfeffer, 1981; and Cobb, 1984).However, there were no significant empirical studies about organizational politics before the 1980s thathad practical implications (Gandz and Murray, 1980).

In this work we show that an individual's perceptions of politics are more important than the actual presence of organizational politics. This is because individuals respond to what they perceive and not necessarily to what is objectively real (Weick, 1979; and Ferris et al, 1994). Analyzing perceived politics is useful for a more comprehensive understanding of the work environment. An individualin a political setting may have a belief that hard work will not be consistently rewarded; asorganizations with higher levels of politics are not concerned much with the personal needs of subordinates. Employees' attitudes toward their work,organizational commitment for example, also seem to be related to the perceived presence of politics (Cropanzano et al, 1997). Sometimes lower perceptions of politics result in higher employee satisfaction, and consistent feedback environments are associated with lower perceptions of organizational politics (Rosen et al, 2006). Political behavior may be used to predict important work outcomes (Cohen and Vigoda, 1999), aspolitical involvement increases job satisfaction, organizational commitment and participation in decision making. The negative relationship between political participation and performance shows that strictly political involvement seems to have negative consequences for behavior and attitudes at work. It is possible that political behavior has different effects in different cultures; as we will demonstrate in this paper, the effects of organizational politics are not necessarily negative, at least in Mexico.

Some performance variables are related to perceptions of organizational politics, but differ substantially across sectors and are higher in the public than in the private sector (Bodla and Danish, 2008). The behavior of people at work is at least as important as their feelings (Randall et al, 1999). Various characteristics of the organization and the job are associated with perceived politics, and politics, in turn, predicts various outcomes. People don't react to politics in the same way across different cultures. Higher-status individuals arein a better position to shape and benefit from political decision-making, meaning that politics has a less deleterious impact onattitudes among high-status individuals. Individuals who perceive their organizational environment to be highly political but are reluctant to leave the organization, engage in political behavior as a mechanism of control through which their situation can be made more bearable. On the other hand, employees who choose to stay with the organization although they are dissatisfied might engage in lesser political behavior, such as absenteeism, as responses to a highly political environment (Harrell-Cook et al, 1999).

A number of studies have found perceived politics to be indicators of various organizational outcomes, including psychological states such as job stress and burnout, and employee attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job ambiguity, scarcity of resources and trust climate are significant predictors of perceptions of organizational politics. These perceptions,in turn, mediate the effects of these situational antecedents on job stress, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Specifically, employees who perceive high levels of politics in their workplace report higher levels of stress, lower levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of intention to quit than do employees who perceive a low level of politics (Poon, 2003). In a recent study, Rosen et al. (2009) examined the role of emotions in mediating the effects of perceived politics on unfavorable employee outcomes. They proposed that frustration translates employees' perceptions of politics into lower levels of performance and increased organizational withdrawal (i.e., turnover intentions) through a mediational path that involves job satisfaction. In this work we demonstrate that perceptions of organizational politics may lead to better performance.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Theoretical contributions on organizational politics

Organizational politics has been a field of study since the 1970's, although it has been defineddifferently by different authors. Pettigrew (1973) defined organizational politics as the strategies executed by individuals or groups of individuals when they want to advance themselves or their ideas, regardless of whether or not those ideas would help the company. Mayes and Allen (1977) define politics as the use of influence for ends or means that are not approved by firms. An important author in the field, Pfeffer (1981), defines organizational politics as "the study of power in action". This definition includes all influence processes that occur in workplace and involves a "market place" in which individuals or groups interact to exchange certain outcomes (Blau, 1964; Rusbult and Farrel, 1983; and Rusbult et al, 1988).

Although an organizational culture is comprised of many elements, the political aspect is the most crucial one as it is adverse to most organizational concerns (Riley, 1983). Altman et al (1985) argued that the intent of organizational politics is to protect or enhance an individual's self-interest and to further another person's or group's interests or goals through legitimate, as well as non-sanctioned means. Political behavior and the use of power affect almost every important decision in an organization (Pfeffer, 1981). When asked to talk about political behavior in the workplace, employees typically describe it in negative terms and associate organizational politics with self-serving behavior that promotes personal objectives, usually at the expense of others (Vigoda, 2000). Kacmar and Ferris (1991), and Ferris and Kacmar (1992) have mentioned that the higher the perceptions of politics in the eyes of an individual, the lower that person's eyes are on the level of organizational justice.

Organizations with a very high political environment tend to reinforce the behavior of those employees who: (1) engage in the tactical use of influence, (2) take credit for the work of others, (3) are members of powerful coalitions, and (4) have connections to high-ranking allies. As organizations reward these activities, demands are placed on workers to engage in political behaviors to compete for resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Political activities in a company should be delineated so we can discussthe organizational politics presented in the empirical study examined in this work. In this sense, within a company, what kinds of activities can be considered as politics? In the definition that we proposed, derived from the contributions of different authors (Butcher & Clarke, 2003; Connor & Morrison, 2001; Drory, 1993; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997), the term *organizational politics* is used to refer to the conscious behavior that individuals, with the strategic intentionality of obtaining or improving positions of privilege within the group, use to reconcile different and even conflicting interests and objectives.

In common with some other authors, we identify three independent lines of research in the area of organizational politics: the first focuses on influence tactics initiated by members of the organization members (Kipnis et al, 1980; Schriesheim and Hinkin, 1990; Zanzi and O'Neill, 2001; Wells and Kipnis, 2001). In this sense political behavior represents an opportunity rather than a constraint for organizational actors (Pfeffer, 1981; Valle and Perre, 2000). The second focuses on employees' subjective perceptions of politics (POP), rather than on influence-tactics or actual political behavior (Ferris et al.,1989; Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Parker et al., 1995; Rosen et al., 2006). This trend seems to have dominated the respective literature (Vigoda, 2003: 7-8). The third has been recently advanced by scholars and is based on the idea that political skill appears to affect the enactment of political behavior in organizations (Ferris et al., 2007; Harris et al., 2007b; Kolodinsky et al., 2007).

Previous studies ofcompany politics have focused on variables such as organizational results, anxiety at work, commitment of employees to the company, job satisfaction and personal factors (Randall et al., 1999). They have also coveredcontext-based performanceand personality (Witt et al., 2002), the way in which employees treat each other in order to impress their bosses (Zivnuska, et al., 2004), and the size of the enterprise as it relates to perceived independence (Conner, 2006). Nevertheless, we have not been able to find studies that reveal a relationship between office politics and organizational outcomes which also have affective commitment as a moderating variable.

Many authors argue that the presence of organizational politics within the organization is a dangerous and negative factor as it relates tolabor, particularly in terms ofemployee performance and organizational outcomes. Nevertheless, empirical research seeks to identify a set of factors that may have the potential to mitigate the harmful effects of perceived politics. Findings support the idea that employees who are in position to properly assess the underlying rationale of organizational behavior and exert a certain control over their respective environment are less likely to report the adverse effects associated with POP (Bozeman et al., 2001; Valle and Perrewe, 2000).Variables affecting the POP-employee outcomes relationship could be categorized as follows:dispositional or attitudinal factors, such as higher levels of commitment

(Hochwarter et al., 1999), self-efficacy (Bozeman et al., 2001; Valle et al. , 2003), positive affective dispositions (Hochwarter and Treadway, 2003), prosocial behavior (Baruch et al., 2004), reciprocity (Setton et al., 1996), personal reputation (Hochwarter et al. , 2007) and need for achievement (Byrne et al. , 2005). Situational factors, such as high levels of informal supervisor and coworker feedback (Rosen et al., 2006), increased levels of cooperation (Harris et al., 2005), teamwork perceptions (Valle and Witt, 2001), workplace spirituality (Kolodinsky et al., 2003), trust and voice orientation (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006) can also be observed along withethical and normative factors such as procedural and interactional justice (Byrne, 2005), distributive justice (Harris et al., 2007a), fair procedures and fair treatment of employees (Cropanzano et al., 1995), fairness and equity (Andrews and Kacmar, 2001; Aryee et al., 2004; Beugre and Liverpool, 2006).

Until now, the focus has been on the self-serving nature of political behavior in the workplace. As already indicated, such self-interested behavior is viewed as a negative form of organizational politics, one generally associated with detrimental organizational outcomes. However, there is a trend in the respective literature that discusses the possibility of positive political behavior in the workplace. Any behavior that might be deemed political is not necessarily detrimental to the organization and its members (Pfeffer, 1992). Ferris et al. (2002) have suggested that focusing on the negative aspects of political behavior might block the possible benefits and functionality received from organizational politics within the organization. Positive and negative politics share a self-serving aspect: the difference is who benefits from the outcomes. Fedor et al. (2008) adopt this perspective: they claim that positive politics is functional rather than dysfunctional and focus on the perceived benefits of political behavior. Their findings indicate that perceptions of positive politics were significant in predicting important employee outcomes (job satisfaction, supervision and co-worker satisfaction, psychological contract), these being positively related to beneficial reactions.

Another trend in literature does not focus uniquely on the argument thatjustifies positive politicsin terms of functional aspects or beneficial outcomes. A legitimate concern should then be to identify the key attributes of positive political processes. To be more specific, Ammeter et al. (2002) view organizational politics as the constructive management of shared meaning that is "a neutral and inherently necessary component of organizational functioning". Gunn and Chen (2006) argue that persuasion, reference to super-ordinate goals, development of coalitions and networking are some positive political tactics that can be beneficial to the organization to the extent that they enhance the effectiveness of strategic management processes and coincide with primary organizational objectives.

Constructive politics is based, among others factors, on specificmotivation: causes worthy of pursuit, , responsibility, seeking the well-being of the organization good rather than self-interest, and avoiding the need to resort to any means to justify ends. It is also notable that constructive organizational politics contributes to greater organizational democracy, since it facilitates the reconciliation of diverse stakeholders' interests and competing views.

According to Butcher and Clarke (2006) effective conflict management is inherently a political activity. The objectives of management consist of the reconciliation of such competing causes in ways which reflect transparency and bring benefits to both individuals and organizations. Constructive political behavior of this type is better appreciated when its presuppositions are further specified. Kurchner-Hawkins and Miller (2006) defend such a view: they argue that it is possible to move from a negative to a positive conception of organizational politics, as long as "a shift in thoughtand behavior" takes place.

Organizational politics in a company is behavior that occurs informally within the business organization and includes intentional acts of influence designed to protect the career of the individual when there are different and conflicting courses of action in the enterprise (Connor and Morrison, 2001; Drory, 1993). Organizational politics hasalso been related to social influence, for example being directedtowards those who can provide rewards that help to promote or protect the personal interests of the individual (Kacmar and Carlson, 1997).

2.2. Theoretical contributions on organizational commitment

The most commonly cited definition of organizational commitment in research work was used for the first time in the 70's by the authors Lyman Porter, Richard Steers, Richard Mowday and Paul Boulian (1974). Organizational commitment, according to these authors, refers to "the relative force of identification and involvement of an individual in relation to a particular organization" (Porter et al., 1974: 604). An individual's commitment to an organization is characterized at least by three factors: 1) a strong belief and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, 2) the willingness to devote a considerable amount of effort to the organization and 3) a desire to remain as a member of the organization (Ibíd.). These 3 factors form the three components oforganizational commitment outlined by Meyer et al. (1993);affective, continuance and normative.

In 1979, a tool was created to measurecommitment in an organization: the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). It represents the most popular measure ofthe construct,being used in 103 of 174 studies reviewed by Mathieu and Zajac (1990). Based on this analysis, Mathieu and Zajac propose an alternative model of commitment to Steers, linking the commitment results to both the individual and the organization. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) define 2 types of commitment: attitudinal and intentional. Intentional commitment is the result of the negotiations between the person and the company related to extra benefits or time investments. Attitudinal commitment is summarized by ways in which the individual regards the company.

During the 80's and 90's a significant amountof studies related to this subject appeared. By 2001, 93 research works had been published about organizational commitment and how it related to job performance (Riketta, 2002). Commitment has also been studied in relation to labor turnover bothpresent and future (Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1993), and with absenteeism (Gellatly, 1995). In the 21st century, many examples ofresearch relating toemployee

commitment to a company are those associated with human resources practices (Meyer and Smith, 2000). Research has also been carried out into professionalism and the level of commitment (Bartol, 1979), the relationship between commitment and the support of the supervisors(Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003; Cheng, Jiang and Riley, 2003) andorganizational characteristics (Fiorito et al., 2007). Different meta-analyses have also been done on published studies which deal exclusively with commitment(Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Blau & St. John, 1993; Cohen & Hudecek, 1993; Riketta, 2002).

In the literature we found that organizational commitment is divided into three factors: affective, continuance and normative. For our analysis we are focusing on affective commitment exclusively, this being the factor which works as a moderator on the relationship between organizational politics and organizational performance. According to Meyer et al. (1993) affective commitment is defined as the sense of belonging that an individual feels for their organization, but also the pride, understanding and empathy that they have fororganizational goals and values.

Individuals that are highly committed to their organization present a high level of involvement and loyalty to it. These behaviors also relate tobetter performance and better organizational outcomes (Meyer et al., 1989), as committed individuals work harder than those that are not dedicated (Chelte and Tausky 1986; Leong, Randall and Cote, 1994). Not only does the theory suggest this positive correlation but also empirical research has proved that there is strong a relationship between affective commitment and job performance (Chang & Chen, 2011). On the other hand, according to Randall et al. (1999) affective commitment is negatively related to the perceived level of organizational politics in an enterprise. However, our study proves the opposite: we noticed that Mexican companies have better outcomes and performance when their employees perceive organizational politics in the workplace.

2.3. Relationship between Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Organizational Commitment

Since this study focuses on moderators of the POPs–outcome relationship, we review some studies that examine the relationship between POPs and organizational commitment.Organizational commitment is important because it impacts work attitudes such as job satisfaction, performance, and turnover intention (Karadal and Arasli 2009). Previous studies have suggested that POPs have detrimental effects on the organizational commitment of employees. Cropanzano et al. (1997) provided a theoretical basis for why POPs could have negative effects on organizational commitment. They argued that a workplace involves a marketplace in which different individuals and groups interact to exchange outcomes.They assumed that each of us works to obtain certain objectives, and that to obtain these objectives, work requires a considerable expenditure of effort. Consequently, choosing to affiliate with a given firm can be seen as an investment of personal resources.

When the marketplace is political, individuals attain rewards through competition and by amassing power. Since not everyone can belong to the strongest cabal, many individuals will have trouble fulfilling their aspirations, and might see their work environment as unsatisfying and stressful. Moreover, in a political work environment, rewards are allocated based on power, and the rules may change from one day to the next. This uncertainty causes individuals to have less confidence that their efforts will lead to any beneficial outcomes, and thus they are less likely to invest additional resources in the organization. Therefore, in a political work environment, individuals see their long-term contribution to the organization as a risky investment, and are more likely to withdraw than those in a less political work environment (Cropanzano et al.1997). On the basis of this argument, it can be assumed that POPs are negatively related to organizational commitment, and, in fact,several empirical studies have found this: (Drory 1993; Nye and Witt, 1993; Maslyn and Fedor, 1998; Witt 1998; Vigoda, 2000; Vigoda-Gadot et al. 2003).

There is a vast amount of evidence in the respective literature indicating the negative effects of self-serving political behavior in the workplace: the evidence shows it is detrimental to both organizational commitment and efficiency.POP is also associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Hochwarter, 2007; Cropanzano et al., 1997; Randall et al., 1999; Witt et al., 2000), reduced levels of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Randall et al., 1999) and overall organizational performance (Vigoda, 2000), as well as increased levels of negligent behavior (Vigoda, 2000). Moreover, higher levels of perceived politics were indicative of negative psychological states such as job anxiety and stress-related outcomes (Ferris et al., 1996; Poon, 2003; Vigoda, 2002), as well as of intention to quit and other withdrawal behaviors (Bozeman et al., 2001; Poon, 2004; Randall et al., 1999).

A politically charged workplace was also discovered toinhibit employees' willingness to engage in helping their co-workers. This stemmed from supervisor trust: the benefits of employee helpfulness based on trust in supervisors were attenuated in political climates (Poon, 2006). Miller et al. (2008), in an important meta-analysis of 79 independent samples from 59 published and unpublished papers, provide a comprehensive examination of the relationship between POP and key employee attitudes. The findings indicate the following: a strong negative relationship between POP on the one hand, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the other; a moderately positive relationship between POP and the outcomes of work-related stress and turnover intentions; a statistically non-significant relationship between POP and job performance; and. the existence of moderating variables (such as age, work setting, or cultural differences) that exert certain contingent effects on particular POP relationships. A second important meta-analytic examination is presented in Chang et al. (2009).

Many authors conclude that perceived politics is entirely detrimental to organizational commitment, as POP are hardly in a position to generate beneficial outcomes. On the contrary, our findings suggest that higher levels of POP could be associated with better perception of affective commitment and organizational performance.

2.4. Relationship between Perceptions of Organizational Politics and Organizational Performance

Many authors have provided two explanations that link perceptions of organizational politics to negative work performance. First, Ferris et al. (1989) suggested that politics are a source of stress that elicits strain responses from employees. Other theorists have suggested that perceptions of organizational politics are detrimental to the maintenance of healthy employee-organization exchange relationships (Aryee et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2004). In this sense, this research is counter- intuitive because we found that organizational politics can contribute toorganizational welfare.

In highly political organizations, rewards are tied to relationships, power, and other less objective factors. As a result, "the immediate environment becomes unpredictable because the unwritten rules for success change as the power of those playing the political game varies" (Hall et al., 2004: 244). Therefore, it is difficult for employees to predict if their behaviors will lead to rewards in political work contexts, and they are likely to perceive weaker relationships between performance and the attainment of desired outcomes (Aryee et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 1997). Supporting this perspective, Rosen et al. (2006) demonstrated that perceptions of organizational politics are associated with performance through employee morale. In their study employee morale and job performance were conceptualized as aggregate latent constructs.

The morale construct represented general employee attitudes and was comprised of job satisfaction and affective commitment and the performance construct consisted of task performance, which captured behaviors related to both the technical cores of organizations and behaviors that contribute to the psychosocial contexts of workplaces (Organ, 1997). Rosen et al. (2006) suggested that lower morale reflects judgments that reward allocation processes that are arbitrary and unfair. Employees holding less favorable attitudes also feel less obligated to reciprocate with behaviors that enhance the performance of their organization. These authors provided evidence, albeit indirectly, that morale is part of the social exchange mechanism that links perceptions of organizational politics to performance.

Miller et al. (2008) provide a comprehensive examination of the relationship between perceptions of organizational politics (POP) and key employee attitudes (fundamental concept of organizational climate) in their review of 59 published and unpublished papers. Their major findings are: a strong negative relationship between POP and job satisfaction and organizational commitment; a moderately positive relationship between POP and job performance, and the existence of moderating variables (such as age, work setting, or cultural differences) that exert certain contingent effects on particular POP relationships. We found that our work could be explained bycultural differences.

Most of the literature shows the negative effects of POP but empirical research seeks to identify a set of factors that may have the potential to mitigate the harmful effects of perceived politics. Findings support the idea that employees who are in position to properly assess the underlying rationale of organizational behavior and exert a certain control over their respective environment are less likely to report adverse effects associated with POP (Bozeman et al., 2001).

Ferris et al (1989) and Drory (1993) found that perceptions of politics were negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This negative relationship was also verified by Vigoda and Kapun (2005) and in a later study by Bodla and Danish (2008) in both public and private sectors. They suggested that employees are sensitive to political decisions made in their environment and react in various perceptual and behavioral ways. However, Parker et al (1995) found that workplace politics were not related to job satisfaction in any significant way. Cropanzano et al. (1997) also found empirical evidence about the effect of perceptions of organizational politics on job involvement.

3. METHODOLOGY AND HYPOTHESIS

3.1. Sample

For the purposes of the present study the number of companies provided by the system of Mexican Business Information was taken as valid (SIEM, 2013).To these 117 companieswe added 17 more to bring us closer to the number of companies that the Footwear Chamber of Commerce said wascorrect. The study then considered a census of 134 companies; those that we were able to locate using the complete list that the Footwear Chamber of Commerce provided, as well as those that we were able to locate through the yellow pages and information from other companies,using a snowball strategy or multiplier. In this way we reached enterprises and workshops that did not appear in any type of record. We interviewed 421 employees at different organizational levels in the 134 companies we addressed:the results of this study are based on the 421 answers to the data we collected.

3.2 Design of information-collection instrument

Asorganizational politics is usually covert or, indeed, not acknowledged to exist at all, how can we study it inside an organization? The solution to this problem is resolved if, as in the survey we used in our study, we asked about organizational politics related to "others". In this way we obtained information becauseindividuals are willing to talk about what they perceive in the conduct of their peers.

Another difficulty involved in the perception oforganizational politics is that the same conduct can be considered as political by one observer and non-political by another observer depending on previous experience and the frame of reference of each observer. However, since the questions in the data collection instrument were designed with regard to how organizational politics relates to concrete and specific behaviors that respondents could identify in theircompanions or superiors, it was possible to reach valid conclusions.

Despite the general idea thatorganizational politics in a company can be studied in order to analyzeorganizational support, it has been demonstrated using multiple regression analysis that organizational politics represents a useful construct and one worth of separate study (Randall et al., 1999). The study also used multiple regression analysis to verify the importance of each variable and the reliability of their respective correlations.

According to Kacmar and Ferris (1991) the perception of organizational politics consists of the perception of the individual about the political activities of others, not themselves. These authors proposed three categories into which the perception of organizational politics can be divided: general political behavior, 'go along to get ahead' (meaning agree out of self-interest andpretend to agree with one's boss, rather than be passive, if one wishes to achieve promotion)andpayment and promotion policies. We will review each one of these factors below:

1. General political behavior (GPG): this behavior is related to active and visible attempts of the individuals to influence others for their benefit. The literature tells us that political behavior in a company will increase if there are no rules governing effective exercise of power (Fiol, O´Connor and Aguinis, 2001; Kacmar et al., 1990; Madison et al., 1980). In the absence of specific rules for guidance, individuals have few clues to know what acceptable behavior means. Therefore, they will develop their own rules.

2. Political behavior of permanency (PBP): this behavior refers to the apparent lack of political action of the individual. The conflict is consistently related to company policy, the essence of this connection is that often political conduct is complacent and therefore has the potential to threaten the interests of others. According to Drory and Romm (1990), the existence ofconflict is an inevitable element in a company and that is why some individuals may wish to avoid it. They are not therefore resistant to other people's attempts to influence them;this type of political behavior is called "passivity".

3. Payments and promotions (P&P): this factor relates to how the organization rewards political maneuvering through the establishment of regulations concerning payments and promotions (Kacmar and Ferris, 1993). Even though company decision-makers are not aware of it thehuman resources systems utilized today tend to reward those individuals who match certain behaviors andpenalize individuals who do not cope with such conduct.

In a review of the Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS), the scale proposed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991), the authors Kacmar and Carlson (1997) proposed new items for the same three factors described above. This is the instrument we used in our empirical research.

3.3 Hypothesis
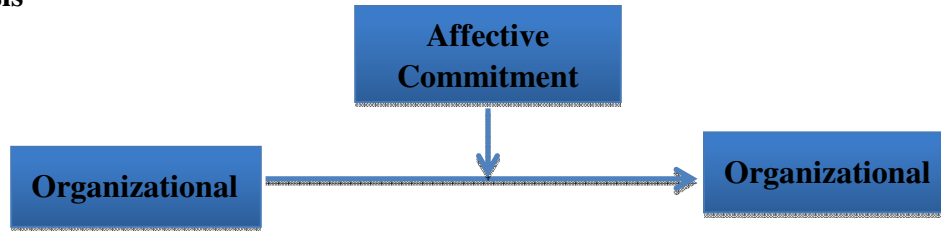
Since politics can be a part of organizational reality and has the potential to contribute to organizational effectiveness (Butcher and Clarke, 2003; Ferris et al., 1996; 2007; Kacmar and Carlson, 1997), it is by nature participative as well as inclusive. It is a concept fundamental toorganizational commitment and also fundamental for organizational performance. This being the case,we present our first hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Perception of Organizational Politics (POPs) is positively related to Organizational Performance.

However, the results of empirical studies have been mixed. Ferris et al. (1996) found that understanding mitigated the negative effects of POPs on job anxiety and satisfaction with one's supervisor, but did not moderate the effect of POPs on general satisfaction.Kacmar et al. (1999) showed that understanding attenuates the negative effects of POPs on job satisfaction, but does not moderate the effect of POPs on anxiety.

In different researchaffective commitmenthas always shown a significantrelationship with organizational outcomes (Meyer et al., 1989; Cheng et al., 2003; Fiorito et al., 2007; Po-Chien & Shyn-Jer, 2011). Because of this, we present a second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Affective Commitment (AC) has no influence on the relationship between POPs and Organizational Performance.

4. RESULTS

After making a correlation betweenthe Perception of Organizational Politics (POPs) and the Affective Commitment (AC) (see Table 1), we can see that there is a weak negative relationship between both variables. This is a surprising result because in the scenario we assumed that the perception of POPs would mean less commitment from the employee. Contrary to what was expected, the POP variablesdo not have a significant influence on Affective Commitment. According to the results of the survey, while both owners and employees areaware of the existence of political tactics, this does not affect the commitment they feel towards the company (Table 2).

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Table 1: Correlations between Performance, Affective Commitment and POPs</td></tr>
</table>

Correlations		PERFORM	AC	POPs
PERFORM	Pearson coefficients	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	421		
AC	Pearson coefficients	.044	1	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.364		870
	N	421	21	21
POPs	Pearson coefficients	.806**	.008	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	870	
	N	421	21	21

**Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2: Correlations between Performance, AC and the three dimensions of POPs						
Correlations		PERFORM	AC	GPG	PBP	P and P
PERFORM	Pearson Coefficients	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	421				
AC	Pearson Coefficients	.044	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.364				
	N	421	421			
GPG	Pearson Coefficients	.671**	-.070	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.152			
	N	421	421	421		
PBP	Pearson Coefficients	.727**	.093	.511**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.057	.000		
	N	421	421	421	421	
P and P	Pearson Coefficients	.620**	-.046	.533**	.599**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.342	.000	.000	
	N	421	421	421	421	421

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

All the components of the POPs have high correlations with the performance of the company but there is a strong negative correlation between performance and affective commitment, particularly with the GPG (-. 070) and P and P (-. 046) dimensions.

Conversely, the PBP has a correlation between average and considerable with the perception of the P and P of the company, and a correlation between weak and average with the affective commitment (AC). The important thing in this table is the high correlation between each one of the dimensions of POPs and the performance of the company that supportshypothesis 1.

Coefficients[a]						
	Model	Unstandarized coefficients		Normalized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Type error	Beta		
1	Constant	1.345	.258		5.223	.000
	AC	.090	.077	.040	1.169	.243
	GPG	.193	.028	.285	6.771	.000
	PBP	.242	.030	.367	8.151	.000
	P and P	.142	.031	.204	4.523	.000
a. Dependent variable PERFORM						

This tells us that while employees are aware of the political manoeuvers of their coworkers; this does not affect their perception of their commitment to the companynegatively.

When we carried out the analysis between the relationship between POPS and the perceived performance of the firm, the results were even higher than we expected (Table 1 and table 2). All correlation coefficients have significance at 0.01 level, with this result we accepthypothesis 1, which establishes a higher perception of organizational politics, corresponding to a higher perception of the firm`s performance.

In order to test hypothesis 2, an OLS regression analysis was held. Table 3 shows the results of introducing the Commitment Affective variable.

Table 3. OLS regression model for Hypothesis 2 (a) Coefficients[a]					
Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Normalized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Type error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.629	.100		16.327	.000
POPs	.578	.028	.715	20.957	.000
a. Dependent variable PERFORM					

The R^2 of the model is 0.512 with a level of significance of .000, which means that Hypothesis 2 is supported and accepted in part, because in this OLS analysis we haven´t added AC as a moderatingvariable.

Table 4. OLS regression model for Hypothesis 2 (b) Coefficients[a]					
Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Normalized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Type error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.279	.255		5.022	00
AC	.113	.076	.051	1.489	137
POPs	.579	.028	.716	20.999	000
a. Dependent variable PERFORM					

The R^2 of the model improves to 0.514,meaning .002 of improvement when the variable Affective Commitment is added to the model. Unfortunately, AC has a Beta of .113 with a level of significance of .137 (above .000), which means that this variable (AC) does not add any value to the model. Therefore hypothesis 2 is accepted.

5. DISCUSSION

As we can observe from the previous section, even when the results are significant statistically (except for the beta of Affective Commitment in themultiple regression model and the level of significance result), it is necessary to emphasize some details.

First of all, the R^2 of both models (0.512 and 0.514 each one) indicates that if there is a good explanation forthe model, the remaining percentage that is left without explanation opens the opportunity to look for new ways to mitigate the adverse effects of AC in the general results of the company.

Findings support the idea that employees who are in a position to properly assess the underlying rationale of organizational behavior and exert a certain control over their respective environments are less likely to report adverse effects associated with POP (Bozeman et al., 2001). In our study we found that POPs is positively related to organizational performance, nevertheless not all political actions are beneficial and many of them could be dangerous fororganizational commitment.

We found that perception of organizational politics is not always a bad influence as some authors suggest (Mintzberg, 1984; Wilson, 1995; Connor y Morrison, 2001; Poon, 2003), instead POPS can be related to higher perceptions of performance, as revealed in this study.

The surprising results about the weak relationship between organizational politics and performance are perhaps justified becauseemployees perceived that politics is just self-interest, designed to get people what they want, and does not necessarily impact on an organization´s perceived performance.

This result is counterintuitive and counter-theoretical because some authors have found that POPS is related to a) lower levels of organizational commitment (Maslyn and Fedor, 1998), and lower satisfaction in the workplace (Ferris et al., 1996; Wilson, 1999); and with b) higher levels of work-related anxiety (Ferris et al., 1996) and intention to leave the company (Kacmar et al., 1999; Poon, 2002).

Another finding in this study is related to the lack of/weak relationship between performance and affective commitment. We think this happens because in the shoemaking industry in Mexico there is a high level of turnover and this situation does not allow employees to have enough time to understand, love and keep working for the company long enough to be committed to it. This is another interesting finding which could lead to a better understanding of SMEs in emergent economies.

6. CONCLUSIONS

One of the objectives of this work was to understand the nature of organizational politics and its relationship toorganizational commitment in order to improve communication in a company andparticipation between employees Although we are aware that political tactics are linked to power and conflict and are associated with an unhealthy organizational climate, we in fact demonstrated the opposite: some kinds of politics can be beneficial for the firm. Therefore, it is possible to reconcile both the legitimate interests of owners and managers with the needs of employees.

This study empirically examines the relationship between perceived organizational politics and the commitment of employees at work. It was found that perceived organizational politics are negatively related to affective commitment but positively related to organizational performance.

We can also conclude that because of the sector and industry in which the survey was run, it is possible that gender, company age and, most importantly, employeeseniority could affect the results we obtained: we found a weak relationship between affective commitment and performance and a weak relationship between organizational politics and affective commitment. Perhaps the age of the employees and the time they were working for the company affected their commitment to it, and because the shoemaking industry in Mexicohas a high staff turnover rate, it is a situation that should be addressed in further studies.

The findings are important for public administrators and policy makers to deal with the consequences of politics in order to enhance the performance of organizations by introducing transparent and merit-based hiring policies. Understanding of corporate culture among employees and theirparticipation in decision-making, especially in young workers, reduces the effect of politics in organizations. It is possible that a multicultural sample could provide much more reliable knowledge about differences in perceptions of politics andrelationship with organizational performance. Therefore, future studies should explore this option more thoroughly for wider generalizations to be made. In addition, it may also be useful to extend our view and to examine the relationship between politics and gender or politics and sector composition. Moreover, job tenure may also be a considerable variable when judging perceptions of organizational politics.

Political action in the company can also be characterized by a balance between self-interest and the interests of others, negotiations over scarce resources where both sides gain, addressing problems and making decisions, opening ways of achieving action and ensuring participation ofgroup members, etc. We argue that politics is inherent to human behavior and therefore also inherent to the operation of any company and could be regarded as the foundation of a healthy organizational climate.

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